Poems

Williams

A FAREWELL, FOR TWO YEARS, TO ENGLAND.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIX PENCE.]

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A POEM.

BY

HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND.

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SWEET Spring! while others hail thy op'ning flowers,
The firſt young hope of Summer's bluſhing hours;
Me they remind, that when her ardent ray
Shall reach the ſummit of our lengthen'd day,
Then, ALBION! far from Thee, my cheriſh'd home,
To foreign climes my penſive ſteps muſt roam;

And twice ſhall Spring, diſpelling Winter's gloom,
Shed o'er thy lovely vales her vernal bloom;
Twice ſhall thy village-maids, with chaplets gay,
And ſimple carols, hail returning May;
And twice ſhall Autumn, o'er thy cultur'd plain,
Pour the rich treaſures of his yellow grain;
Twice ſhall thy happy peaſants bear along
The laviſh ſtore, and wake the harveſt-ſong;
Ere from the bounded deep my ſearching eye,
Ah! land belov'd, ſhall thy white cliffs deſcry.—
Where the ſlow Loire, on borders ever gay,
Delights to linger, in his ſunny way,
Oft, while I ſeem to count, with muſing glance,
The murm'ring waves that near his brink advance,
My wand'ring thoughts ſhall ſeek the graſſy ſide,
Parental Thames! where rolls thy ample tide;

Where, on thy willow'd bank, methinks, appears
Engrav'd the record of my paſſing years;
Ah! not like thine, their courſe is gently led,
By zephyrs fann'd, thro' paths with verdure ſpread;
They flow, as urg'd by ſtorms the mountain rill
Falls o'er the fragments of the rocky hill.

My native ſcenes! can aught in time, or ſpace,
From this fond heart your lov'd remembrance chaſe?
Link'd to that heart by ties for ever dear,
By Joy's light ſmile, and Sorrow's tender tear;
By all that ere my anxious hopes employ'd,
By all my ſoul has ſuffer'd, or enjoy'd!
Still blended with thoſe well-known ſcenes, ariſe
The varying images the paſt ſupplies;
The childiſh ſports that fond attention drew,
And charm'd my vacant heart when life was new;

The harmleſs mirth, the ſadneſs robb'd of power
To caſt its ſhade beyond the preſent hour—
And that dear hope which ſooth'd my youthful breaſt,
And ſhow'd the op'ning world in beauty dreſt;
That hope which ſeem'd with bright unfolding rays
(Ah, vainly ſeem'd!) to gild my future days;
That hope which, early wrapp'd in laſting gloom,
Sunk in the cold inexorable tomb!—
And Friendſhip, ever powerful to controul
The keen emotions of the wounded ſoul,
To lift the ſuff'ring ſpirit from deſpair,
And bid it feel that life deſerves a care.
Still each impreſſion that my heart retains
Is link'd, dear Land! to thee by laſting chains.
She too, ſweet ſoother of my lonely hours!
Who gilds my thorny path with fancy's flowers,

The Muſe, who early taught my willing heart
To feel with tranſport her prevailing art;
Who deign'd before my infant eyes to ſpread
Thoſe dazzling viſions ſhe alone can ſhed;
She, who will ſtill be found where'er I ſtray,
The lov'd companion of my diſtant way;
'Midſt foreign ſounds, her voice, that charms my ear,
Breath'd in my native tongue, I ſtill ſhall hear;
'Midſt foreign ſounds, endear'd will flow the ſong
Whoſe tones, my ALBION, will to thee belong!

And when with wonder thrill'd, with mind elate,
I mark the change ſublime in GALLIA's ſtate!
Where new-born Freedom treads the banks of Seine,
Hope in her eye, and Virtue in her train!
Pours day upon the dungeon's central gloom,
And leads the captive from his living tomb;

Tears

Tears the ſharp iron from his loaded breaſt,
And bids the renovated land be bleſt—
My thoughts ſhall fondly turn to that lov'd Iſle,
Where Freedom long has ſhed her genial ſmile.
Leſs ſafe in other lands the triple wall,
And maſſy portal, of the Gothic hall,
Than in that favour'd Iſle the ſtraw-built thatch,
Where Freedom ſits, and guards the ſimple latch.
Yet, ALBION! while my heart to thee ſhall ſpring,
To thee its firſt, its beſt affections bring;
Yet, when I hear exulting millions pour
The ſhout of triumph on the GALLIC ſhore;
Not without ſympathy my penſive mind
The bounds of human bliſs enlarg'd, ſhall find;
Not without ſympathy my glowing breaſt
Shall hear, on any ſhore, of millions bleſt!

Scorning

Scorning thoſe narrow ſouls, whate'er their clime,
Who meanly think that ſympathy a crime;
Who, if one wiſh for human good expand
Beyond the limits of their native land,
And from the worſt of ills would others free,
Deem that warm wiſh, my Country! guilt to thee.
Ah! why thoſe bleſſings to one ſpot confine,
Which, when diffus'd, will not the leſs be thine?
Ah! why repine if far thoſe bleſſings ſpread
For which ſo oft thy gen'rous ſons have bled?
Shall ALBION mark with ſcorn the lofty thought,
The love of Liberty, herſelf has taught?
Shall *her* brave ſons, in this enlighten'd age,
Aſſume the bigot-frown of papal rage,
Nor tolerate the vow to Freedom paid,
If diff'ring from the ritual *they* have made?

Freedom!

Freedom! who oft on ALBION's foſt'ring breaſt
Has found *her* friends in ſtars and ermine dreſt,
Allows that ſome among her choſen race
Should there the claim to partial honours trace,
And in the long-reflected luſtre ſhine
That beams thro' Anceſtry's ennobled line;
While ſhe, with guardian wing, can well ſecure
From each proud wrong the undiſtinguiſh'd poor.
On GALLIA's coaſt, where oft the robe of ſtate
Was trail'd by thoſe whom Freedom's ſoul muſt hate;
Where, like a comet, rank appear'd to glow
With dangerous blaze, that threaten'd all below;
There Freedom now, with gladden'd eye, beholds
The ſimple veſt that flows in equal folds.
And tho' on Seine's fair banks a tranſient ſtorm
Flung o'er the darken'd wave its angry form;

That

That purifying tempeſt now has paſt,
No more the trembling waters feel the blaſt;
The bord'ring images, confus'dly trac'd
Along the ruffled ſtream, to order haſte;
The vernal day-ſpring burſts the partial gloom,
And all the landſcape glows with freſher bloom.

When, far around that bright'ning ſcene, I view
Objects of gen'ral bliſs, to GALLIA new;
Then, ALBION! ſhall my ſoul reflect with pride
Thou wert her leading ſtar, her honour'd guide;
That, long in ſlav'ry ſunk, when taught by thee,
She broke her fetters, and has dar'd be free;
In new-born majeſty ſhe ſeems to riſe,
While ſudden from the land oppreſſion flies.
So, at the ſolemn hour of Nature's birth,
When brooding darkneſs veil'd the beauteous earth,

Heaven's awful mandate pierc'd the ſolid night,
" Let there be light," it ſaid, " and there was light!"
Ah! when ſhall Reaſon's intellectual ray
Shed o'er the moral world more perfect day?
When ſhall that gloomy world appear no more
A waſte, where deſolating tempeſts roar?
Where ſavage Diſcord howls in threat'ning form,
And wild Ambition leads the mad'ning ſtorm;
Where hideous Carnage marks his dang'rous way,
And where the ſcreaming vulture ſcents his prey?—
Ah! come, bleſt Concord! chaſe, with ſmile ſerene,
The hoſtile paſſions from the human ſcene!
May Glory's lofty path be found afar
From agonizing groans and crimſon war;
And may the ardent mind, that ſeeks renown,
Claim, not the martial, but the civic crown!

While

While pure Benevolence, with happier views
Of bright ſucceſs, the gen'ral good purſues;
Ah! why, my Country! with indignant pain,
Why in thy ſenate did ſhe plead in vain?
Ah! why in vain enforce the Captives' cauſe,
And urge Humanity's eternal laws?
With fruitleſs zeal the tale of horror trace,
And aſk redreſs for AFRIC's injur'd race?
Unhappy race! ah! what to them avail'd,
That touching eloquence, whoſe efforts fail'd?
Tho' in the ſenate Mercy found combin'd
All who poſſeſs the nobleſt pow'rs of mind,
On other themes, pre-eminently bright,
They ſhine, like ſingle ſtars, with ſep'rate light;
Here, only *here*, with intermingled rays,
In one reſplendent conſtellation blaze;

Yes, Captive race! if all the force diſplay'd
By glowing Genius, in Compaſſion's aid,
When, with that energy ſhe boaſts alone,
She made your wrongs, your ling'ring tortures known;
Bade full in view the bloody viſions roll,
Shook the firm nerves, and froze the ſhudd'ring ſoul!—
As when the ſun, in piercing radiance bright,
Diſpelling the low miſts of doubtful light,
Its luſtre on ſome hideous object throws,
And all its hateful horror clearly ſhows—
If Genius could in Mercy's cauſe prevail,
When Intereſt preſſes the oppoſing ſcale,
How ſwift had BRITONS torn your galling chain,
And from their country wip'd its fouleſt ſtain!—
But oh, ſince mis'ry, in its laſt exceſs,
In vain from BRITISH honour hopes redreſs;

May

May other Lands the bright example ſhow,
May other regions leſſen human woe!
Yes, GALLIA, haſte! tho' BRITAIN's ſons decline
The glorious power to ſave, that power is thine;
Haſte! ſince, while BRITAIN courts that dear-bought gold,
For which her virtue and her fame are ſold,
And calmly calculates her trade of death,
Her groaning victims yield in pangs their breath;
Then ſave ſome portion of that ſuff'ring race
From ills the mind can ſcarce endure to trace!
Oh! whilſt with mien auguſt thy Leaders ſcan,
And guard with jealous zeal the rights of man,
Forget not that to all kind Nature gives
Thoſe common rights, the claim of all that lives.—
But yet my filial heart its wiſh muſt breathe
That BRITAIN firſt may ſnatch this deathleſs wreath;

Firſt to the earth this act divine proclaim,
And wear the freſheſt palm of virtuous fame;
May I, in foreign realms, her glories hear,
Catch the lov'd ſounds, and pour th' exulting tear!
And when, the deſtin'd hour of exile paſt,
My willing feet ſhall reach their home at laſt;
When, with the trembling hope Affection proves,
My eager heart ſhall ſearch for thoſe it loves,
May no ſharp pang that cheriſh'd hope deſtroy,
And from my boſom tear the promis'd joy;
Shroud every object, every ſcene in gloom,
And lead my bleeding ſoul to Friendſhip's tomb!
But may that moment to my eyes reſtore
The friends whoſe love endears my native ſhore!
Ah! long may Friendſhip, like the weſtern ray,
Chear the ſad evening of a ſtormy day;

And gild my ſhadowy path with ling'ring light,
The laſt dear beam that ſlowly ſinks in night.

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